

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claim 63 without prejudice and amend Claim 64.

1-57 (Canceled)

58. (Previously presented) A composition comprising a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule, which encodes human hepatitis C virus (HCV),

wherein expression of said molecule in transfected cells results in production of virus when transfected into cells,

wherein said molecule encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3.

59. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 58, wherein said molecule comprises the nucleic acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 4.

60. (Previously presented) A composition comprising a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule, which encodes a chimeric human hepatitis C virus (HCV),

wherein expression of said molecule in transfected cells results in production of virus when transfected into cells,

wherein said molecule is producible by the process comprising, with reference to the nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3,

replacing a nucleic acid sequence that encodes the structural region of hepatitis C virus of said SEQ ID NO: 3 with a nucleic acid sequence that encodes the structural region from the genome of another strain of hepatitis C virus from a different genotype or subtype, to produce said molecule.

61. (Previously presented) A composition comprising a purified and isolated nucleic acid molecule, which encodes a chimeric human hepatitis C virus (HCV),

wherein expression of said molecule in transfected cells results in production of virus when transfected into cells,

wherein said molecule is producible by the process comprising, with reference to the nucleic acid sequence encoding the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3,

replacing a nucleic acid sequence that encodes at least one HCV protein of said SEQ ID NO: 3 with a nucleic acid sequence that encodes the corresponding HCV protein from the genome of another strain of hepatitis C virus from a different genotype or subtype, to produce said molecule.

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62. (Previously presented) The composition of claim 61, wherein the HCV protein is selected from the group consisting of: NS3 protease, E1, E2 and NS4 proteins.

63. (Canceled)

64. (Currently amended) A method for inducing an immune response comprising the administration to an animal an effective amount of the composition of claim 58, 60, or 61 ~~or 63~~ to induce an immune response.

65. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 64, wherein the composition is provided to an animal not infected with a hepatitis C virus.

66. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 64, wherein the composition is provided to an animal infected with a hepatitis C virus.